

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2024, 5.30PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR.**

PRESENT:

- **Mayor:**
Councillor N R Yates
- **Deputy Mayor:**
Councillor A C Lawton
- Councillor N Eardley
- Councillor A K Harper
- Councillor M A Hopkins
- Councillor K Jackson
- Councillor J Jones
- Councillor D J Hawley
- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor J Salt
- Councillor Proudlove (substitute for Councillor Wood)
- Councillor W Rogers (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mrs Sarah M Haydon – Chief Officer (Minute Taker)
- Mrs Margaret Warman – Compliance and Governance Officer
- Ms Jodie Hancock – Events and Partnerships Officer
- Mrs Angela Williams – Administrator Officer
- Tom Sutherland – Prism Solutions

Councillor Rogers recited the disclaimer regarding the recording of the meeting.

72. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

- Councillor C Wood (Substitute is Councillor Proudlove)
- Councillor Smith
- Councillor A H Hart
- Councillor Holdsworth (Absent)

73. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None to declare.

- ii. Other Interests

None to declare.

74. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM PRISM IN RELATION TO CYBER ESSENTIALS

Tom Sutherland from Prism Solutions gave a presentation in relation to Cyber Essentials. He explained that it is a government backed certification which is completed in two parts;

- Self-assessment questionnaire of IT Systems.
- Audit of all technical systems

Cyber Essentials Plus is where Prism then 'fix' any issues that were identified.

This certification is updated annually to reflect changes in technology and new threats. Achieving Cyber Essential offers an insurance policy of up to £20k to recover from a breach.

'Secure 24' is the next step, including:

- Dark web monitoring
- Phishing campaigns
- Type of security

Prism can help write company policies and provide education/training.

The cost of Cyber Essentials Plus would be £2,290 (ex VAT) per year.

There was discussion around the details and benefits.

It was proposed by Councillor Jones, that the Chief Officer circulate the presentation and add the quote to the January agenda of this Committee; seconded by Councillor Proudlove. All **agreed**.

Tom Sutherland left the meeting.

75. MINUTES

- a) To **confirm** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 22 October 2024 (approved at the Town Council meeting on 12 November 2024)

The minutes were **confirmed**.

- b) To **receive** the notes of the Town Hall Finance Working Group meeting held on 7 November 2024

The minutes were **received**.

76. AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS MATTERS

- a) To **approve** the bank reconciliation for September 2024- all accounts (attached).

Proposed by Councillor Yates; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

- b) To **receive** a summary of receipts and payments at 20 November 2024 (attached).

Proposed by Councillor Brady; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

- c) To **receive** the internal control monitoring report for quarter two (attached).

Councillor Hawley discussed the internal control monitoring report. He considered one recommendation in particular:

There was recently a meeting where a Town Councillor declared a pecuniary interest because their partner worked for the organisation concerned. They then went on to speak on the subject and also vote.

The Code of Conduct states: Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in Table 1, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest. Councillor Hawley felt that this situation needs to be addressed, consequently, internal monitoring Councillors recommend that all Councillors and Chairs undertake training in the code of conduct and standing orders, in order to avoid a repeat of such situations.

Councillor Lawton questioned what the training would entail. It was proposed by Councillor Jackson to get a quote for training; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

77. POLICIES

To approve the following policies (attached):

- a) Volunteer Policy (revised)

It was proposed by Councillor Salt to remove section 3.9; seconded by Councillor Jackson.

All **agreed**.

b) Sexual Harassment at Work (New Policy)

The Chief Officer reported that the HR Solicitor has recommended some small amendments. The Chair of this Committee would also have a role where issues could not be resolved by the Chief Officer.

This policy had been developed following new legislation and would be reviewed next year. The new policy was proposed by Councillor Brady; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

78.

- a)** To **consider** disposal of any assets, in line with the Asset Management Policy and Financial Regulations

The Chief Officer reported there are no assets for disposal.

- b)** To **confirm** approved suppliers as part of the Procurement Policy

The Chief Officer reported that two further funeral directors have been added to the suppliers list.

Proposed by Councillor Hawley, seconded by Councillor Proudlove. All **agreed**.

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1, the Council is to determine which items, if any, should be taken with the public excluded.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

79. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE TOWN HALL FRONTAGE TENDERING PROCESS AND NEXT STEPS

The Chief Officer provided a verbal update.

80. TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON THE LEASE FOR THE VISITOR CENTRE

It was proposed by Councillor Jones to go ahead with the searches; seconded by Councillor Harper, **agreed**.

81. TO CONFIRM RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TOWN HALL FINANCE WORKING GROUP AND TO AGREE NEXT STEPS

The Chief Officer reported that there had been two meetings of the Town Hall Finance Working Group. Recommendations were discussed and **agreed**.

82. TO CONFIRM ACTIONS REGARDING UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND ACTIVITIES

The Chief Officer provided a summary of funds spent and reclaimed.

83. TO CONFIRM ONGOING DISCUSSIONS REGARDING THE BRIARSWOOD SITE

The Chief Officer reported that survey work was still outstanding; this would be considered at a future meeting.

84. STAFFING:

- a) To **confirm** a flexible retirement request and to agree next steps.

This was confirmed.

Recruitment options would be added to the agenda for the Town Council meeting in December.

85. QUOTATIONS (TO BE TABLED)

a) To approve a quotation for air conditioning remedial work.

The quote received from Sovereign was approved.

Proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

b) To confirm costs associated with Christmas activities.

The costs associated with Christmas activities were **confirmed**.

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

c) To approve a quotation for replacement dimmer packs- stage lighting

It was agreed to approve the quotation. Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Brady. All **agreed**.

d) To approve a quotation for a 30-year celebration gift

Proposed by Councillor Brady; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

The meeting ended at 7.20pm.

Signed..... Date.....